/75 cont./

868 162. Practical teaching. My dear interlocutor can well understand that the Indians, without setting up a pedagogical chair and a group of educators, do educate and teach their children practically. Their children, in turn, through the natural instinct for imitation, tend to copy what they see in their parents.

857 And, as we imagined, male children practice the handling of their miniature bows and accompany their elders on hunts, and show the aggressiveness and bravery appropriate to their sex, even though it may only be "killing" little pieces of sticks or stones in little improvised hammocks, making little clay cakes like cassava cakes, etc.

867 163. Oral teaching. The other teaching, oral and in-
577 tentional, is very much rarer than among us; however, I have
538 gathered in this regard some data of the old people who, obliged more than they may wish to lead a sedentary life, give their advice to the young people. In the tales which, as has often been said, form the native oral literature, the defects of gluttony, lack of personal cleanliness, carelessness in the face of what is strange and unknown, conjugal infidelity and other sexual vices, lack of love for children, etc., are all ridiculed.

538 It is clear, however, that their morality does not attain
577 the perfection of the Gospel and that frequently in the earliest
864 legendary narrations the spirit of revenge and the refinement of torture of victims is taught; there also occur in these stories sexual scenes which are extremely crude, without their taking any care about telling them in the presence of little children, who acquire a very precocious knowledge and perhaps even a very premature initiation. In this particular they evidently have a rather blunted feeling of morality.

776 164. The bogeyman. In childhood, recourse is frequently
861 taken to the deceit of the enek ("bug" or "funny little fellow"), which is our coco /"bogeyman"/, so that the children will not go far away, so that they will not cry, so that they will obey, etc. They use, thus, the stimulus of fear. Among other threats

411 The standard weapon is still the bow and arrow and practically every [867] male over the age of two has a bow of some sort. Very small boys improvise bows out of twigs, much as white children do, and play "Indian." Older boys [824] have bows almost like the men's but smaller. The standard bow (see Fig. 15) is usually made of araguaney wood (urapadę). Tecoma sp., a heavy (heavier than water), fine-grained, dark or reddish brown wood which is carefully smoothed and polished and is beautiful in finish and texture. Its length, often nearly two meters, is greater than the height of the user; one in our collection measures 190 cm., more than 10 cm. longer than the height of the tallest man seen. Its greatest diameter, in the middle, is usually less than 2 centimeters, tapering nearly to a point at both ends. The anteroposterior diameter is greater than the transverse. The front side is grooved for its full length. Fifteen to 20 cm. from each end is a spiral wrapping and between these one or two cords are stretched in the groove, putatively to add to the strength of the bow and help resist the pull. The bowstring is continuous with one of the spiral wrappings, whence it runs up the groove to the nearest end where it is permanently looped and then down the back of the bow to the other end where it is fastened by a loop that is taken off the wood when the bow is not in use. When unstrung the bow is perfectly straight and the string is only enough shorter than the bow to be taut when strung. Smaller bows, for boys or for use against small game, often lack the front strings and special wrappings and have the bowstring considerably shorter so that the bow is more definitely curved when strung.

Although the Kamarakoto bows are very handsome and carefully made, they will not withstand a heavy pull[111] and their accurate and hard-hitting [224] range is only a few meters. The Indian habit, also encouraged by the scarcity and high cost of powder and shot, is not to fire until he is on top of the game and virtually cannot miss.

A full sized arrow may be nearly as long as the bow, 130-190 cm. Arrows of many different types, from mere sharpened sticks up, are used. The most characteristic are the tarau, panachika, supalari, and waibakasi. Of these the tarau (Fig. 16B) is the simplest, as its name (= "simple") implies. It is used for shooting birds and is a reed shaft with a long wooden point. This point, not particularly sharp, is somewhat flattened and has several barbs asymmetrical- [243] [237] ly whittled on its two sides. It is set into the shaft and the joint bound with kurawai thread fastened with beeswax. The string end or nock commonly lacks the plug usual on other arrows and may be formed simply by compressing and binding the reed. This arrow is usually feathered, while the others usually are not. A typical specimen is 130 cm. in length (shorter than most types of arrows) of which the free point measures 14 cm. The center of gravity is 74 1/2 cm. from the butt.

[824] The panachika (Fig. 16D), used for hunting mammals and all sorts of small game, is more complex with a barbed steel point, wooden foreshaft (of

111 [see footnote on p. 320, category 116 - Analysis]

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Fig. 78 — Kamarakoto Boys Wrestling.

868 Children generally follow much the same occupations as their elders of
● 857 the same sex, beginning by playing that they are doing so, as our children "play house," and ending by performing the actual work as they become capa-
524 868 ble of it. Their playthings, too, are almost invariably small replicas or imitations of objects used by their elders. Thus the first toy of a small boy is commonly an improvised bow, with which he "plays Indian," as a white boy might (Fig. 79). Some of the boys show great ingenuity in making imitations of weapons, tools, etc.[181]

The Kamarakotos make cat's-cradles, but I did not attempt to collect
[121] 114 these. I saw none not already recorded from the Maiuchis or Akawais (see especially Roth, 1924, whose elaborate compilation of these string-figures includes all that I saw among the Kamarakotos).

Mythology

773 Like all Indians, the Kamarakotos have an extensive body of myths and
[126] legends. It is probable, however, that these are already dying out to some extent, since few of the younger members of the tribe seemed to have much knowledge of them or to take much interest in them except as casual stories. Un-
[124] doubtedly, a great many are still accurately known, but our time permitted the textual record of only one.[182] This is a typical, representative example and serves excellently to illustrate the characteristics of Kamarakoto mythology and its probable sources and relationships.

539 Rigid accuracy and authenticity may be claimed for the text here given,
126 despite the linguistic and other difficulties. It was told to me by Antonio
128 Montesdeoca during four sessions in March, 1939. Antonio gave the story not
[115] only from his own memory but also from the collected versions of numerous other members of the tribe, several of whom were present at each session and who were carefully consulted on all doubtful points. The story as a whole was translated into Spanish by Antonio, with passages also given in Kamarakoto by him and by others present. I recorded it in English and then read it back, in Spanish, section by section, to Antonio who carefully corrected the slightest
[538] deviation from the meaning of the Kamarakoto text.[183] The Kamarakoto text itself is not verbally memorized and varies with the teller, but its sense is invariable and this procedure guarantees that this sense is fully retained in the present version.

The Story of Maichak.[184]

539 Maichak was an Indian who lived a long time ago in what we now call Kamarata. At that time, men lived for centuries and centuries. When Maichak

181–184 [see footnotes on p. 329, category 116 – Analyst]

parents and children, and friends there are evident expressions of pleasure and consideration, exchanges of gifts, and efforts to please. Children play together in greatest amity (Figs. 81, 82, [2 A] and it is common to see boy chums who are almost always together and often stand arm in arm.

Children in general lead unusually happy and secure lives. Although not given tasks beyond their strength, they are not treated as something apart from adult life but are integral members of society like everyone else and share in all activities on an equal basis. They are well treated and deferred to as much as one adult would defer to another. They seldom need disciplining, because they act much like their elders beyond a greater playfulness, which is quite innocent, and no adult activities are categorically forbidden them. We never saw a child disciplined and saw few cases of their needing it, in our opinion. The small babies cry infrequently because they usually get what they want without crying. Several times when a baby cried for something that an older child had, the older child gave it, even if a little reluctantly.

Until they can walk, children almost never leave their mothers. They are carried everywhere in the baby-sling, to such an extent that a sling with a baby in it seems part of an adult woman's costume (Fig. 83). [2 A] The baby never feels insecure, because he is always with his mother, and he is never hungry, because her breast is always there for him to help himself. He is an honored and protected member of society from his first breath. There can be little doubt that much of the placidity and amiability of the people has its origin in the baby-sling. Most civilized mothers could learn a great deal about the psychological, if not the physical, care of infants from the Kamarakotos. Their system does not, as some theorists would suppose, produce what we would call "spoiled" children, but produces happy and reasonable ones.

Some Carib tribes have practiced extensive infanticide and perhaps some still do. Of course the Kamarakotos deny this in their case, and it is so contrary to their characters that they are doubtless truthful in this denial. They seem greatly to desire children. Orphans are adopted, usually but not always by a paternal uncle, as a matter of course and are in every respect treated like their own children by the foster parents. No woman said or seemed to feel that she had too many, or even enough, children.

Modesty.

The Kamarakotos are extremely modest, but only on one point. Adults do not expose the pubic region, even before members of the same sex. Men and women show no particular reticence in performing physiological functions in plain sight of persons of either sex, but manage to do so in such a way that the pubic region is not in view. Very small boys are not embarrassed at being quite naked, but as soon as the loincloth is put on they begin to show modesty.

[2 A] [see pp. 265a and 265b, category 116 - Analyst]

[2 A] [see p. 280a, category 116 - Analyst]

[text continues on p. 266]

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Fig. 81 — Kamarakoto Group.
The small children are playing while a woman washed clothes in the Aichá River.

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Fig. 82 — Kamarakoto Chums.
Playmates sunning themselves on a rock after swimming.

Swimming.

526 The men and, particularly, the boys are very fond of swimming and spend hours in the water. They paddle and splash around hilariously. It is peculiar that when seriously attempting to go anywhere in the water, they swim below the surface, staying under as long as a minute and crossing any of the streams in Kamarata (up to perhaps twenty meters) without coming up for breath. The stroke is a rather formless but effective paddle. They tread water and remain at the surface in deep pools with ease, but I never saw them progress on the surface for more than one or two strokes. This is pure conjecture and not entirely probable, but it almost seems that they have learned swimming by imitating fishes and that it has not occurred to them that they might swim and breathe air at the same time.

[481] [147]

Drunkenness.

273 Their herculean drinking bouts have been mentioned in connection with the dances that usually accompany them. Their alcoholic drinks are weak enough to require considerable perseverance in order to get drunken, but at these long parties most adults, men and women, do eventually achieve this condition. Such a party becomes disgusting, from any sober point of view, particularly as vomiting is an expected interlude between rounds, but at the one bout that I attended it did not become seriously disorderly. It is the highest tribute to Kamarakoto character that even with the whole crowd irresponsibly alcoholic, there was no quarreling, no abusive or even particularly noisy language, and that as much courtesy and thoughtfulness persisted as was at all consistent with their condition. Children of all sizes attended and were not neglected but had an equally hilarious time without drinking.[228]

[514] [578] [857]

[452] Such excesses have their aftermath and the only time that I saw the Kamarakotos surly and cheerless was the day after a week of carousing, when all were suffering severely and had lost interest in life or the neighbors.

Incendiarism.

157 372 311 A curious practice not mentioned in previous pages is that of setting fires in the dry season. The dry grass of the sabanas then becomes highly inflammable and the Indians delight in firing it, just to see it burn. Some tribes do this, ostensibly at least, to drive out animals when hunting or as a means of signaling,[229] but the Kamarakotos have, and give, no other reason than they enjoy setting and watching the fires. Flying over the country in this season, rings of fire can often be seen on every patch of sabana and after a party from the Caroni left us we could see columns of smoke in that direction for two days. The forest

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228, 229 [see footnotes on p. 333, category 116 - Analyst]